



# The LUMinary

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### "The Common Pursuits of Neil Caffrey"

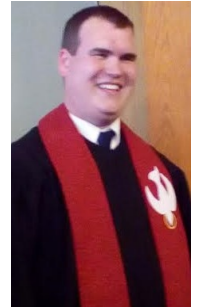
For the past few months, Stephanie and I have really been enjoying a show that has been streaming on Netflix called "White Collar." The six season show follows the work of FBI White Collar Crime Division's Agent Peter Burk and his confidential informant, Neil Caffrey. Neil, thirty-something year old convicted con-artist and bond forger, works out a deal with the FBI: serve as an informant/expert to the White Collar Crime Division, and avoid the remainder of his prison sentence. Peter, a middle-aged, straight-laced, by-the-book FBI Agent becomes Neil's handler and partner in taking down high-stakes corporate criminals, forgers, and financial crime syndicates.

The show, while admittedly more entertaining than accurate and just a bit predictable, is a relatable story for most who watch it, including this pastor. Now don't get me wrong, I've never engaged in white collar crime, and I'm not even 100% sure what a bond is – forget knowing how to forge one. I've never served time in jail, and I don't know anyone who works for the FBI. But I sure can relate to some of the themes throughout the show.

Neil has three constant pursuits throughout the show: freedom, identity, and relationship. Maybe as you read those three words, you started to realize that you've desired those things, as well. Let's take freedom for example. Think of one thing in your life that, if you were free from it, you'd feel relief. It's probably not bond forgery, but it may be something else. A vice perhaps? A habit? A bad relationship? Poor self-esteem? Debt? Freedom is something we all pursue. As you're reading this, we've likely just concluded our celebrations of Easter. Easter is the annual reminder that, through Christ's resurrection from death, the things that seem to have power over us, don't actually have the power we've ascribed to them. Not vices, not habits, not debt. Freedom is there for the taking.

But what about identity? Is identity really something we pursue in life? For Neil, the identity struggle was that the world saw him as a criminal while the Neil we get to know is far more complicated, nuanced and likeable than that. For me, I think about my identity. I'm many things at once: Pastor, sinner, husband, father,

son, friend, community member. Am I always the same person? How does the world see me? Take a second to ask yourself what your identity is? Have you ever sought to change how the world sees you? Maybe the most important question to ask is this: "How does God see you?" In Luke's Gospel, we discover just how God sees us and just how much God loves us.



"Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows."  
-Luke 12:7

Finally, we come to Neil's pursuit for relationship. One of the things that we know about one another is that we are relational beings – introverts and extroverts, the outgoing and the private – everyone! We desire relationship with others. Now, I'm not referring only to romantic relationships, though that can certainly be one such relationship. But don't we desire friendship and companionship? Linked to identity, don't we desire for people to get to know us and love us as we are. As we find ourselves in relationship with others, know that you are loved by the one who desires relationship with you most. God sees you, knows you, and even created you. It is my prayer that you will not only believe this, but come to experience it, personally.

We may not be bond forgers (well, I hope not, anyway) or FBI agents. You may not have a studio apartment in New York City, or know the difference between a Van Gogh and a Da Vinci. Maybe you've never even heard of the show (though I do recommend it. It's pretty good). Either way, know this. You are freedom, relationship, and identity in the God who has created you beautifully. That can never be taken from you.

Blessings,  
Pastor Brian



Words to remember:

- If you expect nothing, you're apt to be surprised.  
You'll get it.
- Be kind to unkind people; they need it the most.

## April Volunteers:

### Coffee Hour:

- 1: Helen Novak & Martha West
- 8: Duane & Glenna Ginther
- 15: Deb McKenzie & Marty Divine
- 22: Clint & Carrie Rathbun Hawks
- 29: Ed & Diana Carpenter

**Head Usher:**

Randy Meder

## COMMITTEE CORNER

### Trustees:

New signs have been installed at the front and rear of the church thanks to memorial donations.

### Missions:

\$ 279 was donated for UMCOR Sunday. Thank you to those who have given and continue to give to missions.

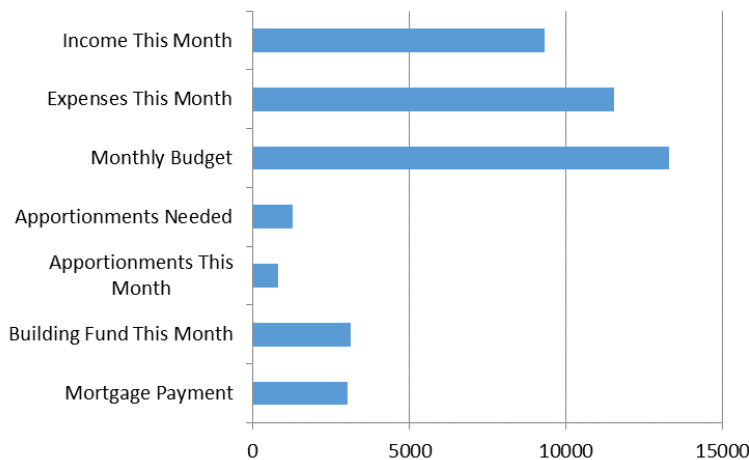
Next Special Offering is April 15



The United Methodist Church  
The people of the United Methodist Church

www.umc.org/9085

## February Financial Data



- 3: Diana Carpenter
- 6: Larry Sparkes
- 10: Jill Hobbs
- 18: Wilma Stichler
- 19: Joan Peck
- 19: Rick Hart
- 20: Pastor Brian & Stephanie West
- 26: Sean Divine

Letters to God from Kids:

Dear God,

There isn't school in heaven is there?



Remember to take home your Compass after church each Sunday. It contains a reflection on the sermon from that morning as well as scriptures and a prayer to read each day and actions we can take during the week. If you missed church, you can read the Compass or watch the video each week on Facebook.

**New District Gathering**

Our new District, currently called District #5, will have its first gathering on Saturday, April 28 from 10:00-12:00 at Owosso First UMC, 1500 N. Water St.

The incoming District Superintendent, Rev. Dr. Jerome (Jerry) DeVine, will preside at this gathering. The agenda will include Worship/Devotions, selection of the new district name, election of officers, visioning, budget issues, and initial planning.

We are hoping to have a small group go from Laingsburg. If you're interested, please contact Pastor Brian.

**Items for Personal Needs Kits for Carnival Workers**

The Missions Work Area will again be preparing about 40 personal needs kits for workers at the Lions Spring Festival. They will be distributed at a breakfast for workers on Thursday, May 17. Items that we need include: disposable razors, shave cream, deodorant, toothbrushes, toothpaste, bars of soap, shampoo, conditioner, etc. We'll also offer new socks and gently used sweatshirts and jeans. Please collect and leave items in the bins under the nametag table in the narthex. Please donate items by Sunday, May 6.



Got stuff that you're not using that someone else may treasure? The Men's Fellowship is sponsoring a church-wide rummage sale May 17 through 19. We will start collecting items after church on Sunday, May 13. We'll accept most everything except for clothing. Sign-up sheets for shifts to work will be posted on the bulletin board across from the kitchen. Please sign up for a shift or two.

Please see John Peck if you have any questions.



**UMW Baked Goods/Candies Sale Saturday, April 7, 2018**

**10:00 - 2:00**



*Anything left over will be sold after church on April 8. Proceeds will go towards our missions. Look for Tammy Wagner and another UMW member with clipboards before and after church on April 1 asking for donations for this event.*



## "THE CORE" YOUTH GROUP NEWS

### Service projects and fun for the Core!

We've been busy planning service projects for the year and the kids are very excited! On March 25, the group did Easter cards for the veterans at the VA Hospital in Saginaw. They were very excited about it and really liked that they were doing something nice for people who had served our country.

Throughout the rest of the year, we'll continue to do our annual Laingsburg Food Bank Scavenger Hunt in May and Christmas gifts for local families in need at Christmas, but we're adding a couple of new things as well:

- Serving meals at the Capuchin Soup Kitchen's Conner Kitchen, a ministry and nonprofit of the Province of St. Joseph of the Capuchin Order. This is a Detroit-area facility helped by many Methodist parishes.
- Adopt-a-Highway: We're currently researching this option with MDOT.

I'm sure other things will come along. Let us know if you have ideas!



Veterans' Cards: (L to R) Hannah Sebenick, Aly Billings, Dan Miller, Matt Balcarcel and Jaylei Kramer have fun putting together Easter cards for our veterans. Of course, no creative direction was needed by Core Coordinators Clint Hawks and Cheri Ramirez (just maybe some attempts to keep things on track!)! Thanks to Pastor Brian for picking out such cute cards.

### 3rd Annual Holy Subs! Sale



April 1 -- April 15

Purchase after church or  
online through the  
church's website

\$5 each or one free with  
each dozen

Pick up subs at church Sat., Apr.  
21 between 11 and noon.

**MOVIE WITH THE PASTOR**

**No movie scheduled for April.**

**Our next movie will be May 5.**



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**POSTAGE  
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REQUIRED**